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THE TORQUE·TUBE

THE NEWS PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS

OF THE 1937-1938 BUICK CLUB • FOUNDED 1980



Volume IX • Number 3



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Volume IX, Number 3

December 1990

William E. Olson, Editor • 842 Mission Hills Lane, Columbus, Ohio 43235



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



THANKS

A half-dozen or so members somehow got the idea that I am spending some of my own money keeping the Club going and pursuing what we might call my "official" duties. These generous souls have sent me contributions in varying amounts, intended — presumably — to help defray some of this expense. The largest such contribution was \$50, which I consider generous indeed. Most of these were checks, and, in accordance with past precedent, I deposited the checks in the Club's account. Also in accordance with precedent, however, such contributions as took the form of engraved portraits of U.S. presidents I put in my wallet (see Vol. VIII, No. 8, page 6). In truth, I do spend my own money on Club business from time to time. I have little or no idea how much this adds up to, and pretty much don't care. That is because: (a) I am not a meticulous and well-organized person, and find keeping track of small transactions very difficult and very boring; and (b) more often than not, the occasion for spending the money (e.g. yakking on the phone with someone) is of personal benefit to me or just plain fun, as well as being "official". (As I have said before, running the Club and getting out this publication I view as a benefit to me, as well as (presumably) to you, my complaints and occasional peevishness notwithstanding. So why shouldn't I throw a few bucks at it here and there?) One member sent me a twenty which was, he said, money for my "running around." I trust he meant travelling to car shows and the like and not promiscuous dalliance. Fortunately my dear wife did not see this; there is no point in having suspicions generated, even if they would be wholly unwarranted. In any event, \$20 doubtless does not get one far in illicit amour. (Remember the guy who asked for "change of a twenty" in Las Vegas? He was told, "Mister, around here twenty is change.") Come to think of it, twenty doesn't get one very far down the highway either these days. In The Great Blue Monster — my 455-engined '76 Deuce-and-a-Quarter — maybe 175 miles if you don't foot 'er too heavy.

All foolishness aside, I wish to thank these contributors sincerely for their generosity and good wishes, and as well, all of you who have sent words of encouragement, praise, thanks, and even criticism, which does — believe it or not — turn up in my mail now and again. It is appreciated, all of it.



FOUNDED BY DAVE LEWIS





For CHRISTMAS

... a word to the wise is BUICK!

WOULD you dispense with the griefs of ordinary Christmas shopping? The laboriously prepared lists that are never quite complete; the milling crowds that dampen the most robust yuletide spirit; the problem of pleasing individual tastes that you do not, cannot know and share?

If so, why not give the family the one grand gift that they agree on wanting: a 1937 Buick? Become an inspired and thoroughly modern Santa with one deft stroke.

Picture the gloriously happy end to great expectations which will come

when that gleaming, magnificent gift rolls up to your home on Christmas morning. Picture that happy huddle at the front window and the swift rush for the front door. Imagine your own futile efforts to be calm.

Yours (if possible) will be the greatest joy of all. Never, for a moment, will you wonder about the rightness of this gift or sense any hollowness in its enthusiastic reception. For you will have given wisely and well for that glad occasion and for a long, long time to come.

See your Buick dealer now to insure Christmas DELIVERY

• Telephone or come in at your earliest opportunity to make certain of Christmas delivery of your new Buick. You will find a willing conspirator in your Buick dealer, who will gladly arrange to bring your gift at the exactly right moment for your family celebration.



*My Pop knows better'n
your Pop 'cause my Pop
went to the Auto Show
twice an' both times he de-
cided "It's Buick Again!"*



**SEE BUICK AT
THE AUTO SHOW**
or at any Buick dealer's

GOOD WILL

This is the "Season" (so-called) when one is encouraged not only to be merry but also to demonstrate good will toward one's fellow man. (Perhaps I should say "person"?) Some of you may know Bill Vander Hoven, a now-retired clergyman living in Michigan and the owner of a nice '38 Special coupe. Bill did not renew his membership this year because he simply could not afford it. He sent me a note apologizing for this, and stating that he is now living on a small pension and Social Security, and is committed to devoting a good portion of his resources to works of benevolence, which must take priority. I was tempted after reading this to continue Bill on as an "honorary" member, but ultimately decided such would not be fair to all the rest of you who have paid, especially those who are not themselves well-off. (Perhaps some member in Michigan can share his Torque Tube copies with Bill.)

I mention this not because I want anyone to feel sorry for Bill Vander Hoven (I'm sure he would not want you to), but rather to introduce a brief Editorial Homily for the Christmas Season. In my profession as attorney for what may aptly be termed a "target defendant" (i.e. a highly-visible group of corporations with lots of assets), I continually come against persons whose life-work seems to consist of trying to pick someone else's pocket, to gain advantage or money in a dishonorable way. (Cf. "brain-picking" in Vol. VIII, No. 9.) The gross and blatant venality of some such benighted individuals is astonishing to me, even after many years of resisting their attacks. Benevolence and good will have no real meaning for such persons, even though they may affect charity or even piety when it suits them to do so. Sooner or later, they will get what they really deserve. Regrettably, the antique car hobby, or business, is not free from them.

Bill Vander Hoven has devoted the better part of his life to giving priority to works of benevolence and good will. That of course is not unique to him, nor to the ordained clergy, nor even to the devout. Religion may teach benevolence and good will but has no monopoly of them, and the virtues and rewards of their practice inure to the believer and unbeliever alike. Such practice may vary in its forms and its objects, and we ought not to confuse benevolence with mere extravagance, or good will with cowardice and lack of resolution. In their true sense, benevolence and good will should be priorities for every person, and I hope that they will be for each of us. I can imagine no greater suffering than to spend one's last days on earth haunted by the knowledge that one has not contributed more to mankind than one has taken.

Here endeth the sermon. May the Coming Year be filled with Good Fortune for all of us.

Bill



Miscellaneous Matter



TRIVIA GEOGRAPHICA

Yes, I know this publication is supposed to be about cars, but I couldn't just let the question about Lee's Summit hang there, after a whole paragraph in the last issue on Grants Pass. Someone from south of Mason & Dixon's Line would have sulked. Roy Schmidt (#673) of Lincoln, Nebraska says this:

"Do I know where Lee's Summit is? I was there a few days ago, unless I was lost. It's a suburb of Kansas City, Missouri, close to the Harry Truman Library, Worlds of Fun park and the K. C. pro teams' stadium."

Roy does not know why the place is named that, or whether it was in fact named for Robert E. Lee. How the names of some places are pronounced by the natives thereof is a fascinating study which I have pursued off-and-on, but we will leave geography and vernacular linguistics alone, with the observation that it frequently pays, upon entering a town with an unusual name, to stop the first semi-intelligent-looking person seen, identify oneself as an outsider, and ask how to pronounce where one is. I have always received courteous replies, and the knowledge thus gained can prevent the looks of scorn and derisive smirking that frequently follow pronouncing it the way one thinks it ought to be, which is almost always wrong.



Well, folks, what do you think of this? I have been accused of California-bashing, but even Californians must, I think, admit that some extra-ordinary events have taken place there (and continue to), and that some things seen in California seem larger than life. At least to us Easterners, they do. Here is one, and larger than life seems an apt description. One assumes this was a funeral car originally (plus one or more sedans), as constructing a stretched frame would seem too monumental an undertaking even for the determined customizer. The builder has dealt with the problem of stretching exterior trim moldings by eliminating them. The overall result is really rather interesting, but I don't like the wire wheels. Bill Schaeffer (#622), who sent me the photo, says the owner made his left-over parts available to more traditional restorers, and that is certainly a virtue of "rod" construction.

UPHOLSTERY KITS

One of our consistent commercial advertisers for several years, Hampton Coach, has recently added more '37 and '38 models to its line of upholstery kits. A newly-revised Hampton ad appears in this issue. (I was supposed to get it into the last issue, but overlooked that, and have duly apologized to Hampton president Jim Roll.) In 1986, under its then-owner Bill Vickers, Hampton undertook to expand its line from Chevrolet into Buick. Bill acquired a '38 model 41 with original interior, patterned a kit from it, and then, exhibiting both generosity and wisdom, gave the Club gratis a sample of the new kit. I examined the sample very carefully, showed it to as many members as I could, and sold it on the Club's behalf a year later after deciding that it took up too much room in the garage. I have not seen any subsequent samples, but have no reason to think that the quality of Hampton's product is not as good, or better, now as it was then, and can recommend these kits without reservation to anyone. All of the sewing and hard work has been done for you, and nothing is left out. If you can manipulate a few simple tools, and can read, you can succeed in giving your car a new, authentic interior at a very favorable price compared with a "custom" job. Anyone who has ever tried to write instructions more complex than "turn left at the second traffic light and go three blocks" knows that it is nowhere near as easy as it seems, and the frequency with which ambiguous, incomplete or plain unintelligible instructions are found in modern products of all kinds bears witness to this. I found the Hampton kit instructions, which I worked through thoroughly, trying to visualize each step as though I were physically doing it, to be among the best I have seen. Despite that, if you do get hung up, a phone call to Hampton will bring specialized help.

You will note from the ad that the Hampton line now includes all '37 and '38 Special and Century four-door sedans and coupes. Several of these kits have been patterned from Club members' cars. I would like to see more models added, especially Roadmaster sedans. If your car has an original interior that needs replacement, but is not among the models for which kits are available, and you can leave the car with Hampton for a few months, they can pattern a new kit from it and give you a new interior at a favorable price.

MORE VANITY

Especially since I have one myself, personalized or "vanity" license plates are always of interest to me, and they provide a never-ending source of auto-related excursions into the whimsical, or even the bizarre.

It appears that Nevada has been pretty loose about what it will allow on a vanity plate, as well as a number of other things. A significant part of the looseness has been the permitting, not only of casinos, but also of prostitution, if carried on in licensed establishments. The most famous — or notorious — such establishment was the 100-room Mustang Ranch in Reno, which earlier this year was seized by the Internal Revenue Service for nonpayment of some \$13 million in taxes. Thwarted in an attempt to continue its business a Bankruptcy Court trustee closed the Ranch, and IRS is, as I write this, undertaking to sell its contents. The IRS manager was quoted in the November 7 New York Times as saying: "We highly encourage the neighborhood yard-sale enthusiast to come out and make a bid on anything." Among the items to be sold — in addition to what one might expect to find — are bottles of emergency oxygen, teddy bears, pajamas, and two Nevada vanity plates. One reads "MUSTANG" — unremarkable, surely. The other reads "PIMP".

Roy Schmidt (#673) says his son has (among other older "sporty" cars) a '67 Corvair convertible, which carries the license plate "XTINCT". This seems appropriate enough. Although Corvairs have not vanished from the face of the earth, and thus may not technically be extinct, they exist only in captivity.

There is a big lawsuit in California about vanity plates as "free speech" or "Constitutionally-protected means of expression." It was bound to happen, wasn't it, and California's just the place. It seems that a gentleman of Italian ancestry in California has this vanity plate: "A DAGO 2". He's not unique; another guy has "I WOP". I'm not making this up. Now, the Sons and Daughters of Italy don't like this at all, and want the State to revoke these plates, or the owners thereof to remove them from their cars, on the ground that the plates are ethnic bigotry and tend to defame persons of Italian descent. The owners say the plates are good advertising for their businesses — yes, I think one would tend to remember them — and in any event are protected "speech". Every Italian I have ever known considers those two words to be the worst of slurring insults, and one can sympathize with the Sons and Daughters' view that they shouldn't be seen on state-produced license plates. But, if a guy wants to voluntarily call himself a "dago", gross as that may seem to some, what's wrong with that? I'm not sure the whole thing isn't much ado about little, and maybe the best thing to do about such aberrant behavior is ignore it. However, it is an interesting question. And where does the state draw the line on vanity plates and who decides such things? We all know there must be certain words that are just not allowed. Who makes up the lists? Can one sneak something by the Great Computer? I once thought of ordering "AWSHIT" or "SHE UHT" or (I liked this one best) "UPYAWZ", but I chickened out.



This photo was taken in the early 1950s when a lot of pre-war cars were still in daily use. It shows the '37 Century owned then, and now, by Paul Culp's (#508) father, parked in front of the Philadelphia "row house" they lived in at that time. Notice the 1940 Ford delivery van in the background.

BREWSTER TOWN CARS - CORRECTION

In the last issue, I reported that Seventy Years of Buick says that the '37 town car pictured therein is thought to be the only Buick town car Brewster made. Our own Club Roster reveals that Bob Trueax (#351) has a '38 Brewster town car, done on a 90-series chassis. This car, which I have not seen, is apparently in rough condition and not presently suitable to be photographed. Sorry, Bob, for slighting you.

According to Bill Shipman (#617), the 1937 Brewster town car (or one just like it) still exists. Bill saw the car undergoing restoration at Barrett-Jackson in Phoenix, Arizona in the spring of 1989. Bill sent me two photographs, which I concluded reluctantly could not be used because they were taken indoors without artificial lighting and do not have enough contrast to survive conversion into half-tones. I say "one just like it" because the car shown in Bill's photos is dark green with black fenders and top, whereas the car described in the J. S. Inskip postcard shown in Issue 2 was "deep maroon with a coral stripe." It is probable that they are one and the same car, and that the present owner decided to change the color; the green-and-black paint scheme looks new. The rear of the body (which cannot be seen in the postcard) is "squared-off" in 1920s - early 1930s style just aft of the rear axle, and a large detachable "trunk" is fitted between the back portions of the rear fenders. Older-style "teardrops" tail lamps mounted on pylons are also fitted; these are probably 1936 Buick.



COASTAL CLASSIC II

1990 "COASTAL CLASSIC" CLUB MEET

By Karren Schaeffer (#622)

The regional meet concept seems to be working well for the Club, out west at least. After last year's meet which Bill and I hosted, we were fortunate to have three couples volunteer to arrange our second annual meet. These six people — Gene and Shirley Smith, Jim and Rachel Flack, and George and Linda Canavan — had never organized a meet before, but they volunteered, asked questions, and hosted a very, very nice show.

A special "thank you" must go to David Bylsma, who donated all the beautiful windshield cards and 1938 Buick drawings left over from the Eastern meet. Those who did not attend that meet missed out on all his hard work, and we certainly appreciated his efforts. I have enclosed some photos, taken early Saturday morning. Some people had not arrived at that time, so I don't have pictures of all the people or cars. We finally had 14 cars (that is, '37 or '38 Buick cars) and 50-plus people, and an unknown quantity of "precious parts" to sell or trade.

Here are some pictures, courtesy of Karren and Bill Schaeffer (#622), of the 1990 West Coast Meet in Santa Maria, California. Doesn't this look like fun? All those neat cars lined up, and people dealin' and gabbin' and havin' a good ol' time? How come more people don't come to these events?



A gathering for talk and photography in front of Ken Schmidt's (#736) '37 model 41. (I don't know what the device mounted on the car's firewall is. Ken, what is that?)

At the banquet Saturday evening we recognized a variety of attendees, including:

- Best of Show - George Ledger (1937 61)
- Best 1937 - Ken Schmidt (1937 41)
- Best 1938 - Don Micheletti (1938 81)
- Best Work in Progress - George Canavan (1937 67)
- Farthest Driven - Cecil Don (1937 44 - 390.5 miles)
- Best Reason Not to Bring Car - Harold Drake
- Hard Luck - Ken Schmidt
- Longest Distance Without Car - Robert Richards (350 miles)

Harold Drake said his restoration was finished outside, but not inside, and however good Buicks may be, they're a bit hard to drive standing up or sitting on a crate. Ken Schmidt had several problems with his just-finished car on the way, but managed to sort them out. Bill and I were not able to stay for the winery tour on Sunday, but we heard it was fun.

Three couples from the Sacramento area have volunteered to organize the 1991 meet, have already begun work, and are very excited about hosting us next year.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Bill and Karren Schaeffer sent a number of fine photos. I made a selection that seemed representative of the event, and these are included in this issue. My thanks again to the people who organized both 1990 Club Meets, East and West. Even after one has everything in place, there are inevitably little things to fix, and worries that something will go very wrong or no one will show up. As of this writing, I believe that Cecil Don (#637), one of the 1991 West Coast organizers, is pondering whether to have the meet immediately before or after the '91 BCA National in Sacramento or at another time. There are arguments both ways. If you have an opinion, call or write to Cecil. (251 B Street, Yuba City, CA 95991; 916/673-9032)

Also as of this writing, although I have received a few suggestions, no '91 Eastern Meet organizer has appeared, and I have begun pondering another Ohio event. I wouldn't mind repeating the 1989 Ohio meet just as it was, but will probably save that for two or three years hence. Doubtless I can invent something else, which may or may not be as good. If anyone else wants to organize something, or is thinking about it, please let me know pronto, or you'll be stuck with what I do.

Organizing such events of course requires some thought and effort, but once one gets going, it can really be rather fun. Our Club meets need not be elaborate, nor replicas in miniature of the big event, to be thoroughly enjoyable and satisfying.



Cars shown left to right in this view are: '38 model 41 in Botticelli Blue - Mike Vosganian (#447); '37 model 44 in Windsor Grey - Steve Miller (#875); '37 model 44 with cream repaint - Cecil Don (#637); '38 model 81 in black - Don Micheletti (#250).



Mr. and Mrs. George Ledger (#750) shinin' 'er up en route to a first prize with their '37 model 61.



NEW MEMBERS



Steve Miller (#875)
2484 N. Mountain Lane
Upland, CA 91786
714/946-1601
'37 46 '37 44

Gene Evans (#877)
502 Central Ave.
Fillmore, CA 93015
805/524-1313
'38 61

Dean Whitehead (#879)
10240-1 Zelzah Ave.
Northridge, CA 91325
818/366-1910
'38 61

Douglas Campbell (#876)
2692 Riverside Ave.
Merrick, NY 11566
516/379-3038
'37 81

William Schwantes (#878)
8245 Rainbow Dr.
Glen Haven, WI 53810

Ed Lewis (880)
P.O. Box 1686
Estes Park, CO 80517
303/586-2962
'38 41

WHEN BETTER AUTOMOBILES ARE BUILT, BUICK WILL BUILD THEM

Every good quality that this year swept the Buick car gloriously to new levels of success and popularity is preserved and enhanced in the brilliantly beautiful new Buick for 1937. See and ride in this marvelously sound and able car and you'll know instantly why the world is saying

"It's Buick again!"



YOUR MONEY GOES FARTHER IN A GENERAL MOTORS CAR

NOTE ALL THESE FEATURES, FOUND ON NO OTHER CAR IN THE WORLD. Valve-in-Head Straight-Eight Engine . . . Aerobal Carburetor . . . Sealed Chassis . . . Torque-Tube Drive . . . Unisteel Body by Fisher . . . Tiptoe Hydraulic Brakes . . . Knee-Action Comfort and Safety . . . "High Output" Generator . . . Jumbo Luggage Compartments . . . Double Stabilization . . . Safety Glass

\$765 to \$1995 are list prices of the new Buicks at Flint, Mich. Standard and special accessories groups at extra cost. Model shown, Roadmaster Six-Passenger Sedan, \$1275 at Flint, fenderwells extra



JACK JOURNAL:



JACK JOURNAL: REAL JACKS & NEAR JACKS

By Clint Preslan (#461)

I found a 1937 Buick jack in the Blue Field at Hershey. As our Editor emphasized in his essay "Jacks" (Volume VIII, No. 7), 1937 Buick jacks disgraced themselves early in service and are now quite rare. Like any good '37 jack, this one didn't work, had a lozenge-shaped hole in its main casting, and had no handle. Its carcass was also gooey with gear oil, but it was a 1937, and wrapped in newspaper, soon occupied the bottom of my parts bag.

Later, as I walked by a table thick with early Ford parts, I thought I saw another '37 Buick jack. It was not. According to the vendor, this jack belonged to a 1934 Ford and was a "close, but no cigar" Buick match. However, the Ford jack had a steel 3/8" diameter one-piece crankhandle about 26 inches long. The vendor wanted \$20.00 for the Ford jack, complete. (I paid \$35.00 for the Buick cadaver) The Ford handle fit the slot in the Buick jack as if made for it: looked decent too, I thought. My criteria are the line drawings on page 87 of the 1937 Buick Owner's Manual. The Buick handle seems to have 90-degree bends, while the big bend in the Ford handle looks more like 70 degrees. The Buick handle also seems longer at the hand-crank end.

The main casting of the Ford jack is 5/8" taller than the casting of the Buick jack. The Ford jack lacks the rectangular base plate and has no U-shaped bracket on top of the "lift" post.

With some skill and imagination, a base plate and U-bracket could be fitted to the Ford jack, creating a "near" Buick jack. I have a "near" Buick jack myself; Buick jack, Ford handle. I suppose the main idea here is:

A "near" jack is better than no jack,
But still ain't no real Buick, Jack.

Bill's essay contains an excerpt from the 1928-1938 Master Parks Book showing the "Auto Specialties Mfg. Co., St. Joseph, Mich." as the manufacturer of the Buick jack. The 1928-1948 Ford Parts Manual does not list a supplier of jacks, but The Early Ford V-8 As Henry Built It* does. Page 49 discusses jacks: "A new Auto Specialty double screw type jack which collapsed to 6 inches was introduced in January 1934...." (No pictures, unfortunately). The main casting of my Ford jack is 6 inches tall. According to The Early Ford V-8, the Auto Specialties axle jack was used until the end of 1937 when Ford converted to bumper jacks in passenger car production. Auto Specialties was one of several jack suppliers used by Ford.

Since Auto Specialties made jacks for Ford and Buick, the firm probably built jacks for other makes as well. Undiscovered varieties of "near" Buick jacks must exist; and, rare as they are, 1937 Buick jacks are still out there.

*The Early Ford V-8 As Henry Built It (1932-1938), by Edward P. Francis & George DeAngelis, Motor Cities Publishing Co., South Lyon, Michigan: 1987. (219 pp.)



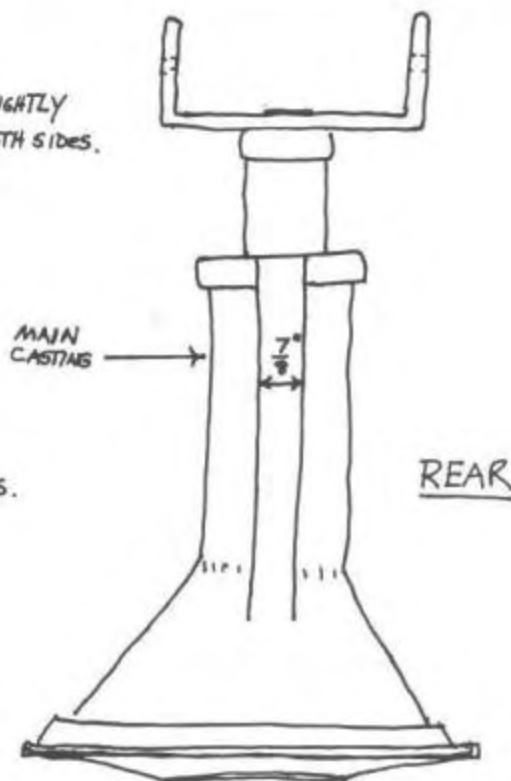
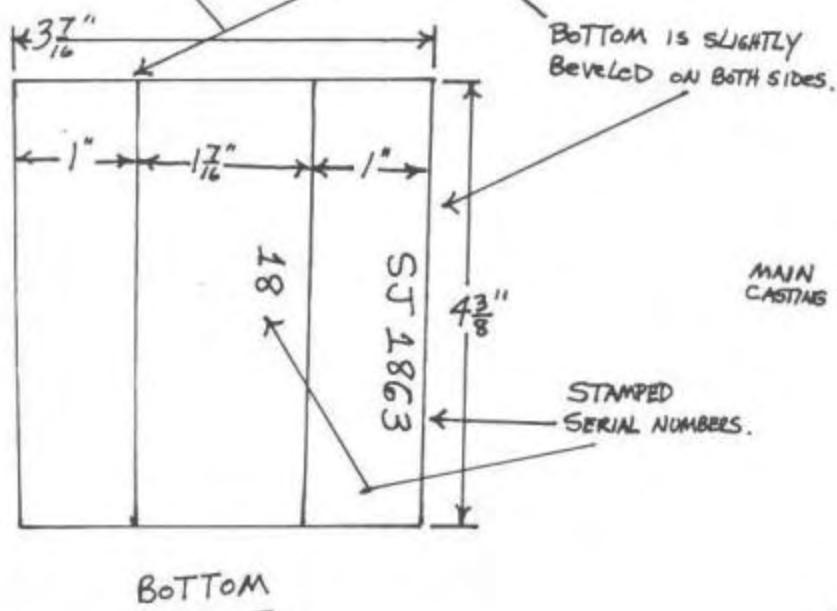
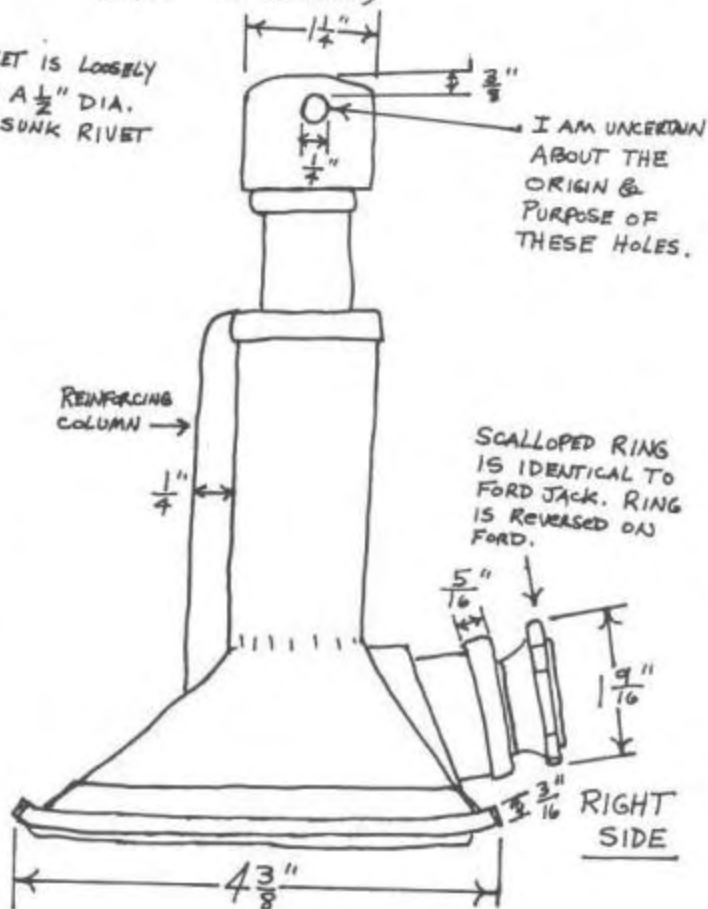
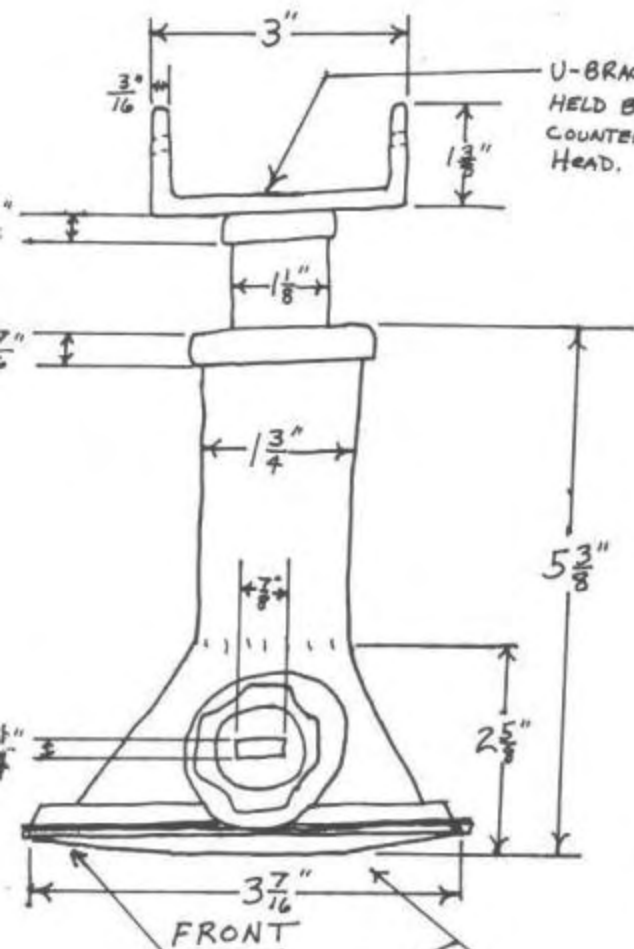
"Rocky" Preslan demonstrates fit of Ford handle into Buick jack. Would you use that thing under even one wheel of a 4,000-pound car? Not me.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Clint's discovery should give all you jack fans a "lift" and "raise" your spirits. Now all you have to do is "screw up" your courage enough to start pickin' through Ford stuff. Whatever we may think of Fords, it must be admitted that there were many more 1930s Fords than Buicks and Ford parts are more numerous and easier to find. Assuming one finds a '34-'37 Ford jack, how to make it into a counterfeit 1937 Buick jack? The slight differences in size and configuration of the main body (shown on Clint's drawing) will never be noticed by any save the most finicky and knowledgeable examiner, so we can safely disregard them. Thus, we need to make the U-shaped bracket on top of the post and the rectangular base. The former could be contrived from a piece of channel iron of approximately the right size. This could be attached to the post of the Ford jack by drilling and tapping a hole for a step bolt or carriage bolt. (A step bolt is like a carriage bolt, but has a flat head. If a carriage bolt were used, the head could be filed more-or-less flat.) The bolt head would have to be countersunk into the channel iron. Drilling the post might be machine shop work, as the post is probably hardened steel. The base presents a more difficult problem. If one is good at woodworking, a base could be made from maple or birch, or maybe poplar, and then sandblasted to give it the look of a metal casting. Or one could possibly contrive a mold and then cast a base in fiberglass. This is a terrific winter project for the ingenious "jack-of-all trades." Remember, you are not going to really use the thing, so strength is not important.

Based upon the colors shown in Clint's photographs, I will revise my former statement about the color of Auto Specialties jacks. "Lawn-Boy" green is too light and too yellowish. "Highway sign green" or "British Petroleum green" (i.e. new Sohio or Boron gas station green) is what I'd call it.

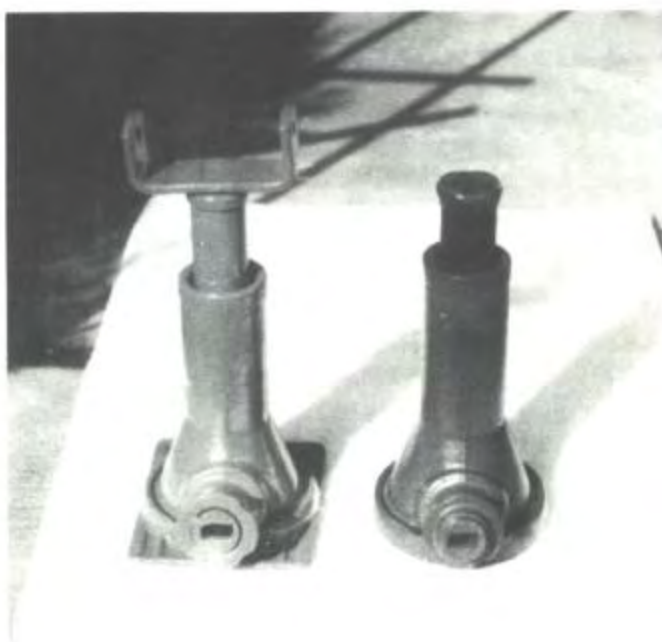
1937 BUICK JACK (NOT TO SCALE)

BUILT BY
AUTO SPECIALTIES
MFG. CO.





Side and front views of '37 Buick jack.



Side and front views of 1937 Buick jack (left) and 1934-'37 Ford jack (right).



Notes on Interiors



FRONT FLOOR TREATMENT - 80 AND 90 SERIES

Much more is known about interiors used in 40 and 60 series cars than about their larger relatives, the Roadmasters and Limiteds. Recently I borrowed a 1928-1941 Master Body Parts Book and, in the course of looking for something else, happened upon the entries for "MAT, front floor rubber" (15.286) and "CARPET, front floor" (15.300). A study of these entries yielded information I found somewhat surprising and curious.

The book confirms what we knew: that 40 and 60 series cars had a rubber mat on the front floor. ('37 and '38 have different part numbers, and '38 Special and Century four-door convertibles a different part number from other '38 40 and 60 series models; the actual physical differences, if any, were probably minor and as a practical matter must be ignored today in any event.)

Now we come to the curious part. The book lists a rubber front mat for all '37 and '38 90-series cars and the 80-C; it does not list any front carpet for those models. By contrast, a front floor carpet is listed for the Roadmaster closed sedans (81, 81-F, and in '38 only, 87), but no front rubber mat.

As to the Limiteds, the book lists a different part number for the 90-L than for the others (90, 91 and 91-F). The 1937 90-L mat was priced at \$6.00, whereas the mat for the other 90-series models was priced at \$10.60, indicating something more elaborate. The 1937 80-C mat was also priced at \$6.00 and had its own part number. The 1938 90-series listings are similar, except here it is stated that the mats for the six-passenger sedan (91) and eight-passenger sedan (90) had a carpet insert; these were priced at \$12.50. (There was no Limited six-passenger formal sedan (91-F) in 1938.) The '38 90-L and 80-C mats were priced at \$6.00, like their '37 counterparts. As a general matter, the book gives more detail for '38-'41 cars than for earlier years, and it may well be that the '37 90, 91 and 91-F mats had carpet inserts also, although the book does not so state. Something must have accounted for their higher price.

As indicated above, front floor carpet is listed for all '37 and '38 80-series closed sedans. No details as to colors, weave, etc. are given and no rubber mats are listed for these models. Presumably the color would have matched that of the rear seat floor carpet (for which no details are given either). So far as I know, the carpets were either tan or gray, depending upon the balance of the interior color scheme.

It is easy enough to see why a rubber mat would have been used on the front floor of the 90-L. This model was clearly intended to be chauffeur-driven only; the chauffeur was more likely to have muddy boots than those riding in back, since he might have to step in slop to get around to the right side to open the door for them, had to tread around in a garage, stable or carriage house, and was not entitled, under prevailing views of social structure, to plush surroundings, however valuable his services might be to the employer. It is far less easy to see why a rubber mat was specified for the other Limited models and for the 80-C. The latter, in particular, was much more likely to be driven by its owner, and the 90-series sedans (even the '37 91-F) could be dual-purpose: perhaps driven by a chauffeur, household servant, or other type of employee (e.g. in a funeral home), but possibly driven by an owner as well, exclusively or in part. (See the '38 Limited ad on page 32 of the last issue; the text is clearly aimed at the owner-driver and no chauffeur is visible in the picture.) Why no carpet for these models? They were, after all,

top-of-the-line products, and a rubber mat, even with carpet inserts, does not seem "right" to me.

The Roadmaster was designed primarily as a family car for the upper middle class, and was more likely than the Limited to be driven by its owner or a member of his family. Even the formal sedan (81-F) was intended to be a dual-purpose vehicle for the family that employed only two or three household servants, rather than an army of them. (Household servants were far more common then than now, and many more people could afford them.) On a formal occasion, where the owner wished to make a show, or where the car could not be left at the owner's destination (e.g. going to the opera), the male servant donned cap and black bow tie and drove the car, with glass partition rolled up. On many other occasions, the owner drove it himself, with glass rolled down. (Often, when my sons were younger, and a trip of more than five miles with them in the car was an exercise in temper control and stress management, I wished for such a partition that I could have rolled up.) The 1937 color sales brochure bears this out. Of the model 81-F it says: "This family sedan also can be converted into a chauffeur-driven limousine by raising the plate glass partition." (A similar statement was made about the model 91-F, but this model was far less popular and successful as a dual-purpose vehicle; it appeared in 1937 only and only 156 were sold. The Limited was really too big to be a "family" car for most people.) The foregoing considerations suggest to me that front floor carpet was appropriate for the Roadmaster closed sedan: it was intended to be owner-driven, most if not all of the time, by a man of some means, and needed to be distinguished from its cheaper cousins by a richer interior. These same considerations, however, would appear to apply just as well to the 80-C and the 91.



This family sedan also can be converted into a chauffeur-driven limousine by raising this plate glass partition.

Some time ago, I decided that the Master Parts Books have some limitations as far as establishing "correctness" is concerned. They can tell us that something was done, or that a particular part was used on a particular model, but it is risky to assume that what we are told was true exclusively. Moreover, for all their detail, the books seem to have gaps here and there in the information presented, and sometimes the entries can mislead the researcher, struggling 50 years after they were printed, to figure out what in hell was what. This "coefficient of unreliability" is probably greater for interior or "trim" parts than for running gear.

It may thus be unsafe to assume that no '37 or '38 Limited was ever produced with a fully-carpeted front floor. We have discovered numerous lists of "options" and "accessories" during the past several years, and, as I have said before, each time I see a new one it seems to vary somewhat from all those I'd seen before. The Master Parts Books sometimes say nothing about "options". The majority of 90-series cars was doubtless ordered from the factory; few dealers kept more than one or two in stock, and most didn't want any. It cannot be concluded that full front carpeting was not a special-order option for 90-series cars.

As a practical matter, most if not all 90-series cars have been restored with carpeting in front, and will continue to be. Carpeting looks better, and it would be difficult

and expensive to create a custom rubber mat with carpet inserts. If I were judging a BCA meet I would not take points off for a carpet (or a mat) if it were neatly done. The rubber mats sold by Bob's Automobilia for 40- and 60-series cars can be adapted to the larger cars, but I believe require some modification, and I am not sure how well they fit. Ingenious persons could probably add carpet inserts to these mats, but would have to decide for themselves the dimensions and placement of the inserts.

Any member who has a 90-series car with a clearly-original interior is urged to communicate with the Editor. To the extent that any of the foregoing discussion is inconsistent with the discussion that appeared under "Questions" a few issues back, the latter is hereby amended. This has turned out to be a long-winded discussion of what may be a small point. (That is, of course, what lawyers are supposed to be good at.) The exercise does illustrate, however, the trouble that one can get into when trying to research, and speculate about, questions of authenticity, and the sort of effort that is often required. In terms of using a Master Parts Book, this was a relatively easy one, as it involved looking at only two "group" numbers. There are many more questions that will require a more difficult and complex effort, to which the answers may be no more (or even less) definitive. In any event, I believe it appropriate for me to set out at some length my thinking about such questions, rather than simply announcing model "A" had part "X" or did not have part "Y". There is still too much uncertainty about too many things too indulge in a lot of "black letter rules", and an exposition of the analysis provides opportunity for the reader to evaluate or criticize it.



LIMOUSINES & FORMAL SEDANS FRONT INTERIOR TREATMENT

A member who is restoring a 1937 Roadmaster formal sedan asked several weeks ago whether such cars were produced with the leather-in-front-cloth-in-back interior treatment frequently seen in limousine-type cars in the 1930s and even today. This question stumped me, and I could find no definitive answer anywhere. My reply was that it could have been done as a "special order", but that I believe the standard factory treatment for formal sedans was cloth front and back. This is based upon the one or two such models I have seen, and the intended dual-purpose use of these cars. (See discussion of 80 and 90 series front floors in this issue.) The owner of a car who intended to drive himself, as well as to be driven on occasion by a servant, would not have wanted the front seat to look like a chauffeur's compartment.

Any '37 or '38 Buick model could be ordered from the factory with a complete leather interior. The colors were the same throughout the line: black; tan; gray; green; blue; red. Different sets of "trim" numbers were assigned to (a) 40 and 60 series, (b) 80 series, and (c) 90 series. For example, black leather for 40 and 60 series closed cars is 302, for 80 series 316, and for 90 series 326. For convertible coupes and "phaetons" the comparable numbers are 344 for the 40-C, 46-C, 60-C and 66-C, and 356 for the 80-C. This suggests, but does not establish, that different grades of leather were used depending upon series and body style.

The questioner also asked whether, if leather were used in the front compartments of formal sedans, how much is covered: seats only; seat frames; doors; headliner? I could not answer this either, but later inquired of Ray Lawson (#16), who I believe owns the

only factory-bodied limousine (90-L) in the Club, as to what his car looks like. Ray confirmed my recollection that the entire front compartment of his 90-L is done in leather: that is, seat, seat side frames, door panels and headliner; i.e. everything forward of the division panel, except the floor and the "kick panels" (firewall and two sides below the dash), which are the usual "leatherette" or "imitation leather" or "vinyl" or whatever you wish to call the stuff. This suggests strongly that if a formal sedan had been ordered with front leather only, it would have been "trimmed" in the same fashion.

It may be noted here that in 1938 (but not 1937) cloth and leather combination interiors could be had throughout the entire line. These I believe had leather seats with cloth door panels, center pillars, headliner, etc., and this type of interior treatment must be distinguished from the leather-in-front treatment for chauffeur-driven cars.

We may also ask: why leather for chauffeurs? As much as anything else, this was (and is) simply traditional, going back to the days of the "brougham" or "berline" town car, where only the rear compartment had a roof and the chauffeur and footman sat outside in all weathers. In such a vehicle, leather for the front seat was a must, as it wore better and could be waxed to repel water and road dust. The same considerations apply, albeit to a lesser extent, to chauffeur-driven closed cars, but tradition and a desire to clearly distinguish the environments of master and servant were probably equally important.



BACK WINDOW CURTAINS

In answer to a reader's questions in Vol. VIII, No. 8, I stated that I believed the roll-up back window shades (or curtains) were installed only on sedans, not on coupes. (Obviously enough, they would not have been found on convertibles.) The 1928-41 Master Body Parts Book confirms this under Group 15.362: "Curtain and roller assembly, back window." The parts are listed as applying only to closed sedans. There are five different part numbers given: (1) for '36 and '37 80 and 90 series; (2) for '37 40 and 60 series; (3) for '38 40 and 60 series; (4) for '38 80 series; and (5) for '38, '39, and '40 90 series. What the differences among these were is unknown to me. It appears that use of the "curtains" was ended in 1938 except for Limiteds.



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TECHNICAL TIPS



COOLING SYSTEMS - YET MORE: THE AWFUL QUESTION ANSWERED

The November 1990 issue of Skinned Knuckles begins in earnest that publication's series of articles entitled "An Engineering Analysis of Automotive Cooling Systems." The November article considers That Awful Question Upon Which I Came to Grief a while ago: Can...(gad, I can hardly bear to write this)...Can Coolant Go Too Fast Through the Radiator to Shed Its Heat?

The author, an engineer of apparently great learning, analyzes the Awful Question in four pages of smallish type (smaller than used herein) with charts and numerous equations. I undertook to study this, but found the going very rough. (It was texts such as this one that led to the foundering, many years ago, of the ship of my ambition to become a chemical engineer, and indirectly, to my entering the legal profession, to which I am far better suited. The latter has, of course, no dearth of obscure texts, but at least they have no equations and no little italic letters inside giant parentheses.) Those among you whose brains can sail easily through thermodynamics and fluid mechanics may find this article's analysis interesting and enlightening, and I will say that for an engineering text, the whole is set forth very well, and the correctness of its conclusion seems amply demonstrated. For the rest of you, I will simply quote that conclusion:

"We conclude that the liquid coolant cannot go too fast through the radiator to shed its heat."

That is, the Awful Question has been answered definitively and authoritatively in the negative. All those Ford-engined dirt-track car drivers who busted blades off the impellers of their water pumps were Victims of False Doctrine. The Heresy of Too-Fast-Moving Coolant is hereby forever nullified, expunged and banished. I will never, never expound it again.

The next Skinned Knuckles article will tackle two more Big Questions: (1) how does the presence or absence of a thermostat affect a cooling system? and (2) which is better, plain water or 50% water with 50% ethylene glycol? I will duly report the answers.

OIL PUMP REPAIR

With the engine of my Roadmaster all apart, I decided to renew an attack on the oil pump, even though it had been repaired once before. The Buick oil pump is one of the make's more vulnerable parts. In 1930s form the pump consists of a cast iron body in which two helical spur gears rotate, a cover through which the oil is drawn from the pan or sump, and a relief valve designed to control pressure and keep it within acceptable ranges. Modern pumps are very similar; however, in '37 and '38 the cover was a die-cast alloy. It must mate perfectly with the pump body, or the pump will leak. (If oil pressure drops to near zero at idle with a warm engine, the chances are very good that the pump

is leaking.) Unfortunately, the die-cast covers tend to warp and/or crack. If warped, they can be machined flat to restore the mating surface, and sometimes that takes care of the problem. That's what I did in my first pump rebuild. A cracked cover is very difficult or impossible to repair. (I took one to a guy who claimed ability to weld aluminum and zinc alloys; he tried, but failed.) After my first pump rebuild and before my current whole-engine rebuild, I acquired a 1940 Buick oil pump repair kit (Part 1723-1393176; see Vol. VII, No. 6, p. 14). This consists of a steel cover plate and a die-cast inlet pipe. The steel is much less prone to warpage. I also acquired, from Kanter, another repair kit, which consists of the two gears plus the shaft that drives the pump off the bottom of the distributor. This kit is also available from Terrill. All of this went into the old pump body, as I wanted no trouble with future warping, and the shaft on the old gear set was a bit worn. In the course of this I discovered: (a) that the gear kit is a Melling K-20-A; and (b) that I'd paid Kanter \$38.50 for it a few years ago. Melling is a leading manufacturer of oil pumps and similar devices, located in Michigan. I suspected that had I known the part number I could have bought the Melling kit for considerably less money through an auto parts jobber. This suspicion proved accurate; I gave the part number to Dave Paulisin (#704), and he got the same kit for all of \$14. K-20-A will fit large engine pumps; there may well be a modern Melling gear kit for 40-series engines, but if so I do not know what it is. (The cover plate kit will fit all series.)

Before we pass to another subject, we may observe that a significant fraction of the hardware sold by dealers in "antique auto" parts is "modern" stuff that they buy from NAPA or other distributors. The dealers know, or have figured out, what these parts are, what they fit, and where to get them. In most cases, the dealers re-package the items, and of course sell them at higher prices. One cannot reasonably object to some price mark-up; after all, the dealers have gone to the trouble of finding out what this stuff is, and have their own costs to recover. These costs are much higher per item than those of the big distributor like NAPA. Nevertheless, marking the item up almost three-fold, as was the case with my Kanter oil pump kit, seems excessive. Frequently, it is easier for us to buy such items from the "antique auto" dealers; however, when we know what such a part is and where it can be obtained, we are certainly justified in getting it direct from the distributor ourselves.

INSTALLING A DISTRIBUTOR

By Harry Logan (#651)

I had a most frustrating experience trying to re-install a distributor on my '38 Century. I planned to get the engine running and make the final timing adjustment using a timing light. I followed the instructions in the '38 Shop Manual, but the engine just would not start. Finally, I remembered I had a '48 manual, which has more information, especially steps 1 and 3.

Step (1) makes sure the number one piston is ready to fire when you align the flywheel timing mark with the index mark on the flywheel housing. If you do not do this, the engine will not run. This was my mistake!

Step (3) makes sure the rotor is in position to send a spark to number one cylinder. You've got to start with the rotor slightly clockwise to allow for the amount the cam will rotate as the driving gears are meshed. If you do this correctly, the rotor segment will be under number one high tension terminal after the distributor is installed, ready to fire number one cylinder.

After I did this, the engine started. I found that by connecting the timing light to a 12-volt battery instead of to the Buick's 6-volt battery, the flashing light was noticeably brighter, making it easier to do the timing.

I also found the use of a remote starting switch helpful. It should be connected between the coil's positive lead and the starter solenoid terminal nearest the engine block. Now you can crank the engine without having to get in the car.

This is a slightly revised version of the distributor installation instructions from the 1948 Buick Shop Manual.

1. Check to make sure that timing mark on flywheel is aligned with index mark on flywheel housing, with No. 1 piston on compression stroke.
2. Place a new cork oil seal on distributor housing.
3. Rotate distributor cam in direction of arrow on cam until rotor is nearly in position to fire No. 1 cylinder, and contact points have just closed from the preceding cam lobe which fires No. 4 cylinder. This position is necessary to allow for the amount that cam will rotate as the driving gears are meshed.
4. Rotate oil pump shaft with screw driver to align slot in shaft with tongue on lower end of distributor shaft. Install distributor in crankcase with vacuum control pointing to rear of engine and approximately parallel to side of crankcase.
5. Install attaching bolts with flat washers and lock washers leaving bolts just loose enough so that distributor housing can be turned. Rotate distributor housing until contact points just start to open, then tighten attaching bolts. This will permit starting engine for setting the timing.
6. Connect pipe to vacuum control and connect primary wire to terminal stud.
7. Install distributor cap. If ignition cables are disconnected from cap make certain that cables are connected in accordance with numbers stamped on distributor cap at each terminal. These terminals are numbered in a counterclockwise direction according to engine firing order. (If there are no numbers on the cap, see the diagram in the manual.)
8. It is very important to have the ignition cables pushed all the way into terminals in distributor cap and coil, and to have the cable nipples pushed firmly over the terminals.
9. Check and set ignition timing.

EDITOR'S NOTE. This is a good time to tell you about a problem I encountered with my '37 Roadmaster. (This occurred before I encountered all the big problems.) The engine never really ran all that well, despite attempts to time it according to the usual procedures. Through the help of my friend Ed Hunkins, it was discovered that the engine could not be timed from the mark on the flywheel. After fiddling with it, Ed estimated that the mark was off by about 60 degrees. (The mark on the flywheel should align with the mark on the housing when No. 1 piston is at top dead center, or very close.) Once this was figured out, the engine was timed by making an adjustment for the misalignment — which Ed knew how to do — and ran much better. (Ed also discovered that the vacuum advance wasn't working; replacing it helped a lot also.) I concluded that the people who had "rebuilt" the engine in the past had put the flywheel on in the wrong position, off by one bolt hole. (If six bolts hold the flywheel to the back end of the crank, moving the flywheel out of correct alignment by one bolt would result in the mark being off by 60 degrees.) However, several people I talked with told me it was not possible to put the flywheel on wrong.

Later, after the beginning of my discovery of the "big" problems, the engine came out of the car and was disassembled. We found no marks on the flywheel, nor anything else to indicate correct positioning, and it appeared that the flywheel could be mated to the crank in several different positions vis-a-vis the timing mark; i.e. the bolt holes are arranged symmetrically, and there is no locating pin. Maybe we are still missing something, or something is missing from the car.

I will take this opportunity to thank Harry Logan for the several contributions he has made to The Torque Tube over the past few years. (See, e.g., photos in the last issue.)

BRAKE CYLINDER REPAIR

In looking over the membership renewal forms, I noticed that Thomas Parkinson (#722) says that he owns a business that does sleeving of brake cylinders. If you need this kind of work done, contact Tom at

Thomas Parkinson
2238 Woodside Lane
Niles, MI 49120
219/259-1643 (days)

DELCO-REMY PARTS INTERCHANGEABILITY

Some time ago, I said in answer to a member's question that there was very little interchangeability among Buick and other GM makes in the 1930s. That is so, but there is some, especially with Delco-Remy electrical and ignition parts. Here is an excerpt from some Automotive Electrical Association parts manual pages sent to me by Norman Feil (#271), which shows other makes that used the same part as Buick. This info may prove handy at swap meets.

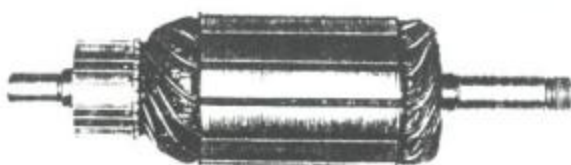
1871826 (Code A-1)

Used on

Buick 40 1934-35
Buick 1936-39 All
Cadillac 8 Ser. 60, 65, 1937-38
Cadillac 8 Ser. 60S, 61, 1939
Chevrolet 1929-39
GMC Truck 1930-39
I.H.C. 1936-40
Olds 1935-39
Packard 6, 1937-38
Pontiac 1933-39

GENERATOR ARMATURES

DELCO-REMY



1921235

1857963 Brush Set

Consists of

1866148 Main (2)
1906940 Third (1)

Used on

Buick 40 1934-35
Buick 1936-39 All
Chevrolet Master 1934-36
Chevrolet 1937-39 All
GM Truck 1937-41
I.H.C. 1936-40
Olds 6 and 8, 1934-39
Pontiac 6 and 8, 1935-39
Studebaker Truck 1936-39
and others

GENERATOR BRUSHES

DELCO-REMY





1913500 8 Byl.
1913502 6 Cyl.

1913500

Used on
Buick 1937-48
Oldsmobile 8 1937-48
Oldsmobile 8 1949
(1110014 Dist.)
Packard 8 1947-50
Pontiac 8 1937-48

COMPLETE BREAKER PLATE ASSEMBLIES



DELCO-REMY



1918148

Consists of one each
1817254 Breaker Lever
1871862 Contact Support

Used on
Buick 1931-52
Buick 1953 40
Cadillac 1949-53
Olds 8 1937-53
Packard 8 1947-53
Pontiac 8 1937-53
Studebaker V-8 1951-53

CONTACT SETS DELCO-REMY



1836893

Used on
Buick 1931-50
Cadillac 8, 1930-48
LaSalle 1932-40
Olds 8 1932-50
Packard 8, 1947-52
Pontiac 8, 1932-53
and others

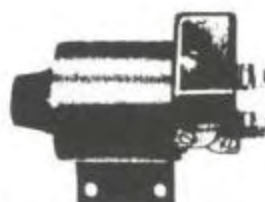
ROTORS DELCO-REMY



STARTER SWITCHES DELCO-REMY



SOLENOID



1542

Used on
Buick 1934-41
Cadillac 1936-41
LaSalle 1937-40
Packard 8 1941; 1946-47

STARTING MOTOR ARMATURES DELCO-REMY

1919267

Used on
Buick 40, 50 1934-35
Buick 40, 1936-37-38
GM Truck 1934-38
Olds 1929-38; 1951-53
Pontiac 1934 (736 B)
Pontiac 8 and 8 1935-38
and others



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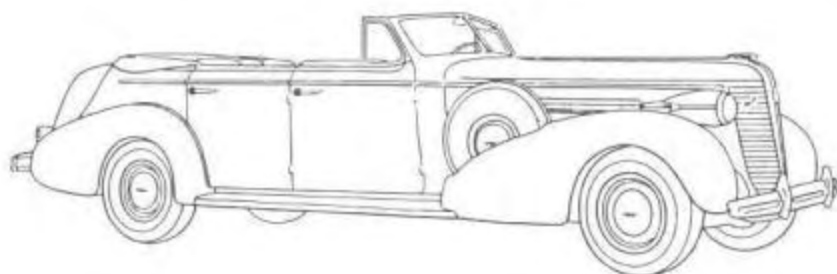
By Norman ("Tippy") Feil (#271)

Here's another of my stories that may help someone. I have a '41 Buick with 72,000 miles. The car was bought new by a lady in New Hampshire that lived to be 93 years old. The fellow that bought it from the estate drove it to Florida. It was his wife's everyday car. It still has the original floor mat in the front, but the car is rusty in places. I didn't drive it very often and let it sit for long periods of time. Recently I got it out, towed it, and got it started, but it was running on six cylinders. I checked the plugs and they were all firing. I checked the compression and Nos. 4 and 6 cylinders had nothing. So I pulled the valve cover. The 4 & 6 intakes were stuck closed and the pushrods were broken. As it was running, I saw that there was no oil getting to the valve train. The oil line to the valve train was plugged. Varnish or rust on the valve stems can make them stick, usually open. With mine they rusted in place, which was closed. Sometimes you can loosen them if you put some Marvel Mystery Oil around the valve stem and run it. Or place a block of hard wood on top of the valve stem, hit it with a hammer to start to loosen the valves, then run the engine to check that they are not sticking. You can use a vacuum cleaner to clean any chips or dirt so they don't get into the oil.

Sticking valves are very common in older Buicks and Chevys especially if they have a lot of miles, haven't had the oil changed regularly and high detergent oil used. They both have the same type of overhead valves and oil feed to them. Leaving them sit is the worst of all. The oil dries out, hardens and congeals, and plugs the small oil lines. The valve train oil line comes out of the block below the fuel pump, then goes up to the top right front of the engine and goes into the side of the head. It does a 90-degree bend up in the head and comes out inside the valve cover. A small oil line runs up over and down into the top of the valve train. Where the oil line goes into the side of the head, there is a fitting in the head that the oil line screws into. Take this fitting out and behind it there is supposed to be a screen about 1/4' round and 1' long. This screen is intended to keep gunk out of the valve train, but often the screen gets clogged, and does more harm than good. You need a wire or a dental pick to pull it out. (Some of the old timers used the screens and some threw them away. Chevy had the same arrangement but they didn't use the screens.) Then blow out all the lines and fittings with compressed air, putting them back one at a time, starting the engine each time to make sure the oil is coming thru. If you can't start the engine, take the plugs out and the engine will turn over fast enough with the starter to pump up the oil. The holes in the top of the rocker arms oil the valve stems, and are easy to blow back to clear. The holes that oil the push rods are in the rocker arms, and you have to take out the adjusting screws. Any that have springs on the sides of them, you can do without taking the overhead off. Screw the adjusting screw all the way up and then pry the rocker arm to the side that the spring is on. You can then take the push rod out. Now take a small piece of rag and plug the push rod hole so the adjusting screw doesn't fall into it. If it does, you will have to take off the side pan. Now screw the adjusting screw out of the bottom. There is a hole in the rocker arm inside this hole. Put your finger on the bottom of the hole, and the blow gun in the top and blow it out. It is good to start the engine or turn it over, making sure your getting oil thru before you put it back together.

The timing gears and chains have the same condition as the valve train. When the oil line to them gets plugged, they soon are gone. I recall stories of people replacing timing gears and chains, and overhauling motors, not blowing out the line to make sure the oil was getting to the gears. Soon they were gone again. Any time the timing gears

go out, it's because the oil line is plugged and they are running dry. Whenever you take out the radiator, you have a lot of the work done, and this is a good time to pull the timing gear cover to make sure its getting oil and draining back into the pan O.K. Replace the crankshaft seal in the timing gear cover.



OIL PUMP AND MAIN BEARING TROUBLE

By David Paulisin (#704)

This is another story about a "rebuilt" engine. When I purchased my 1937 Roadmaster "phaeton" it was pretty rough, but I was told that the engine had been rebuilt, and that appeared to be the case. After the car was finished (except for a few relatively minor items), and I had paid a considerable sum of money to the people who worked on it for me, some problems began to appear. In addition to some potent clutch chatter (see "A New Kidney Stone Therapy," Vol. VIII, No. 9), the oil pressure started dropping off, especially at warm idle. The Editor said this sounded like the old leaking oil pump trouble to him and he was right, but that was not the whole trouble. I decided I'd had enough of reliance on other people's skills and knowledge, and that I should go for some "hands-on" experience.

I am now doing the work myself, but under the direct supervision of friend and mentor Bob Polidan, a retired Buick engineer, master mechanic, and old-car nut. It has indeed been a hands-on learning experience so far, and I am lucky to have Bob as my professor.

Several weeks ago we put the Buick up on stands and cement blocks in my garage. I pulled off the oil pan and flywheel cover and removed the oil pump. A week or so later the diagnosis truly began. We worked from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM with a few breaks, mixed with humor and a lot of old car talk. It was a great learning experience.

Problem I. The oil pump should never have gone back in the engine during the first "rebuild" the way it was. It had worn gears and leaked. Someone had sandblasted the inside of the cover and the mating surface of the housing, a treatment that probably made the patient worse, and certainly no better. There was far too much play in the shaft. Based on a suggestion from the Editor, I ordered a Melling repair kit, which will provide a new gear set and shaft, and I am having a local machine shop surface the cover and housing flange. This should cure my pump problem.

Problem II. Excessive main bearing clearance. We used green Plastigage, and .002 shim stock for a final check. The Plastigage test seemed to come out OK at .002, but it was not good enough for Bob. He explained to me that Plastigage can be misleading because you cannot flex a 100-pound straight-8 crankshaft. You can bring up a connecting rod bearing, but not a heavy crank. The final test for clearance consisted of the old shim



Dave Paulisin (#704) holding his oil pump and its intake float, with his '37 80-C in the background. A dentist by profession, Dave finds his latex gloves useful for work on the car as well as his patients.

stock technique. I placed a .002 shim on the babbitt surface of a main bearing that had checked out OK at .002 with Plastigage. I then torqued the main bearing bolts to 100 (see p. 327, MOTOR Vintage Car Manual 1935-1953), with the shim stock touching the crank journal and the babbitt surface of the bearing. We then tried to turn the flywheel with the transmission in neutral. It turned! Conclusion: clearance was in fact greater than .002. Plastigage "lied", due to our inability to draw up the crank because of the physical nature of its size and weight, and its position mounted in the engine relative to the car. (That is, gravity.) (Editor's Note: Remember, this work is being done with the engine in place in the car.)

Each main bearing had a set of shims equal to .02 clearance. I peeled one at a time slowly, until placement of .002 shim stock on the babbitt surface in contact with the crank journal would not allow the crank to turn. (Again, with the bolts torqued to 100 lb./ft.) Thereupon, I would remove that main bearing cap, remove the shim stock, and then replace the cap with the remaining shims, again torquing the bolts to 100 lb./ft. I would then try to turn the flywheel. I also removed the coil wire and carefully tried to turn the engine over with the starter. In each case, it turned tight but it turned. This procedure was repeated on each of the five main bearings. We removed .005 clearance from one, and .004 from each of the others.

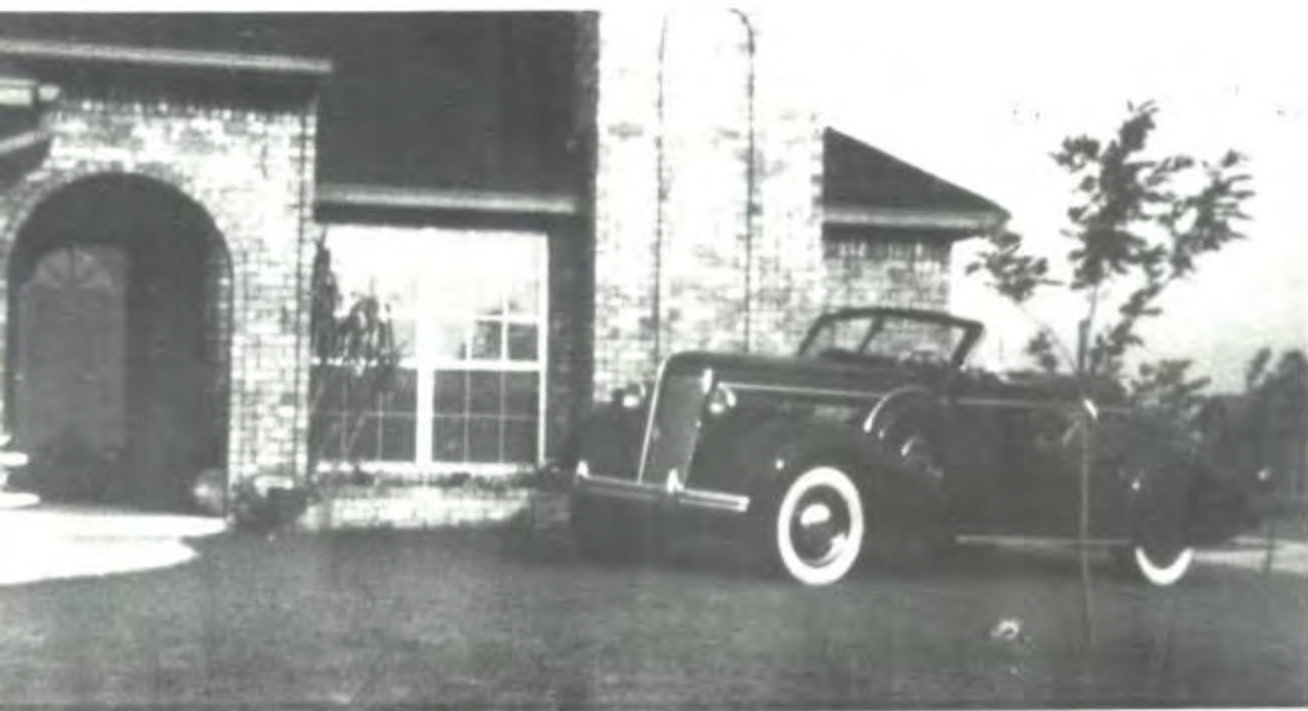
I was shown "witness" marks in the oil on the babbitt. This verified the diagnosis of excessive clearance; it could be seen that not all of the babbitt surface made contact with the crank journal. These marks were noted prior to the adjustment with shim stock.

For the rod bearings we used only Plastigage. There were no shims in place. The babbitt rod bearings measured .002 clearance. Therefore, we concluded that the crank had been "turned," and a substantial amount of metal taken off the rod bearing journals, in a prior rebuild, thus allowing the rod bearings to be placed without shims. The rod bearings appeared to be adequate and were left alone. In any future rebuild, bearing inserts would be needed to replace the old babbitt.

This was another faulty "rebuild". The engine work was done eight years ago, before I acquired the car, and the engine was never run after that until I had it put back in the car in 1989. The rebuild shop enjoyed a good reputation, but I have been told that its work has declined in quality. Fortunately, I did not drive the car very far before the oil pressure problem caused me to investigate its cause. The low oil pressure was caused by a worn and leaking pump and excessive main bearing clearance. However, no major damage was done: the crank and cam both looked good.

As indicated in a previous story, I was able to reduce the clutch chatter considerably by cleaning oil out of it. The mechanic who worked on the transmission had filled it much too full of oil. However, that was not the only problem: the pressure plate is warped and the flywheel needs to be replaced or resurfaced. I am now much more confident of my abilities, and with some help I will solve this problem also.

I want to thank the Editor for help and advice. My wife thinks I am crazy, but I have been an "old-car nut" since birth! My grandfather drove a 1928 Graham-Paige daily until 1962.



A nice '37 Special convertible with fender skirts owned by Bill and Christina Dyer of Norman, Oklahoma. The Dyers also have a '37 Century sedan.



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PARTS FOR SALE

'37 large engine cylinder head in exc. condition--\$100; intake & exhaust manifolds, like new--\$100; air cleaner--\$45. You pay shipping.
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Trippe lights, juniors, good unrestored condition, complete with brackets, chrome OK--\$145; '38 voltage regulator--\$10; '38 rear window shade (see Vol. VIII. No. 8, p. 27) for closed cars complete with hardware--\$45. CURT BROHARD (#554). 1084 Gardenia Terrace, Alameda, CA 94501. 415/521-4299 or FAX 415/523-4461 8-5 M-F PST.

1937 Century: pair, front fenders (non-welled), good cond.--\$75 ea; heater (motor runs)--\$50; radio (not working)--\$75; new master cylinder--\$85; large series engine parts: block--\$150; crank--\$150; cam--\$60; rods--\$10 ea; valve cover--\$25; oil pan--\$25. All prices plus shipping. RICK WILSON (#539). 22 Noble St., Delaware, OH 43015. 614/362-1134.

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For 1937 large engine: good flywheel or ring gear ('36-'37) 0.666-1292796, 1286787; pilot shaft for clutch alignment (input shaft spline); wrench for valve tappet adjustment; oil drain tube at rear main bearing cap. DAVID PAULISIN (#704). 3514 Darcy Drive, Birmingham, MI 48010. 313/540-3562 home; 313/531-7800 office.

Flywheel cover-'37 60 series. AL ANDERSON (#723). 780 Lakeview Drive, Lakewood, NJ 08701. 201/370-1422

1937 40-60 series intermediate steering arm #1298664, new please; 1937 defroster right & left inlets, deflectors & "Y" fitting. GENE McCOY (#573). 20 Raff Avenue, Floral Park, NY 11001.

Pair of good running boards & good steering wheel for 1937 Century coupe (model 66-S). GLEN BORCHARDT (#701). 824 19th St., Windom, MN 56101. 507/831-2480.

1937-38 40 series: I need a set of main bearings, NOS or very good used. JOHN HUFFMAN (#623). Box 614, Clemson, SC 29633. 803/287-4552.



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1937 model 46 parts car. No engine, transmission or fenders. \$400 GLEN BORCHARDT (#701). 824 19th St., Windom, MN 56101. 507/831-2480

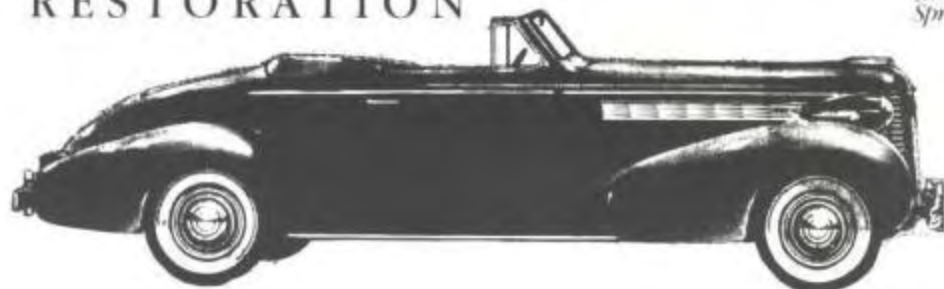
Two 1938 Special 4-door sedans plus parts. One car is very solid, though well worn. The other is a better-than-average parts car. Both engines disassembled. Many extra parts including excellent body parts. \$2000 takes all. Pictures \$2 cash. THOMAS PARKINSON (#722). 2238 Woodside Lane, Niles, MI 49120. 219/259-1643 days.

1937 Century, black 4-door with sidemounts. I have owned this car approximately 20 years. Rebuilt engine. Body & seats are in good condition; needs headliner & door upholstery. Exhaust manifold cracked. New steering wheel & other parts. Asking \$7500. The car has been started but not road driven during the past 13 years. ROBERT PAUSER. 261 Seven Mile N.E., Comstock Park, MI 49321. 616/764-0805.

The Editor is advised by Bill Shipman(#617) that the 1937 Special "drop-head" with British Alveamarle body pictured on page 170 of Seventy Years of Buick is for sale at Black Point Auto in Scarborough, Maine. Bill says "condition is probably #3; asking price is \$60,000." Although the car is doubtless now a "one-of-a-kind" it is the Editor's opinion that it will not sell soon unless the proprietor of Black Point is willing to moderate his demand, which he may well be prepared to do.

1937 model 66-S, Century sport coupe. Runs & drives, good sheet metal, but is in need of restoration. Will make someone a nice car. Asking \$3800. RICK WILSON (#539). 22 Noble St., Delaware, OH 43015. 614/362-1134.

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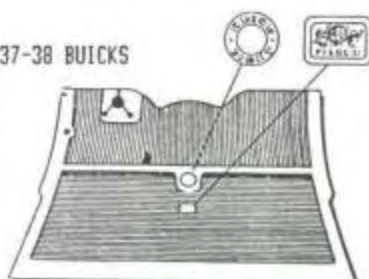
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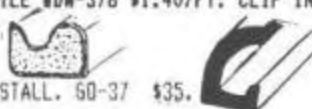
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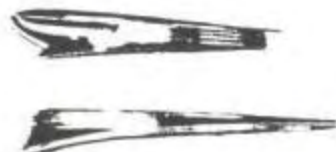
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